

secrets he has discovered, except that the blackmailer carries on his private enterprises under the ban of the law, while the Summoner was a Church official. Chaucer's Archdeacon

\* hadde a Surrmour rody to  
his hand, A slyer boy was noon in  
Englelond;

For siibtllly he hadde his espiaille,  
That taught him, where that him inighte  
availe.  
He coude spare of lechcmrs oon or two  
To techen him to foiire and twenty ino.

This false thoef, this Sonipnour, ' qnod the  
Frere,  
' Had alwoy baudes red.v to his hond,  
As any hauk to lure in Bnglolond,  
That told him al the secroo that they Imewe;

His master know not always what  
he wan. "Withouten matidoment, a  
loved man

*summon* *f.rwmm u >timtion*  
He coude somno on poyne of  
Cristoscur«. And they were  
gladde for to fhlo his pur#,

And make him grot<5 fetftts att^  
nalo. And right as Judas hadd<'  
pursfis flinalo, And was a ihoof, right  
Hwic-ho a thcftf was he; His maistor  
hadde but half Ms dxiotoo.\*<sup>1</sup>

The end of the story is that the devil carries off the Summoner while he is trying to blackmail an old woman for 12<sup>^</sup>.<sup>2</sup>

The officers who presided over the Bishops' courts, whether prelates or inferior clergy, were scarcely better than their satellites. It was an age of very widely spread immorality in all classes, so contemporaries said. Nobles and gentlemen were not ready to endure the annoyance and humiliation of doing penance for their sins, but were quite prepared to compound for them handsomely- The prelates were on their side ready to receive money for their courts-The convenience was equally great for the clergy; many of them were unwilling to give up partners whom the rule of celibacy deprived of their legal status. To be able to buy off

<sup>1</sup> *Friar's Tote,*

\* *Ibid;* »\*M\* Aj»,